

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**  
**(Adopted 11/22/04)**

**PRESENTATION, SPECIAL SESSION & WORKSESSION**  
**OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**Tuesday, January 20, 2004**

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Mayor Porter	City Manager Finn
Councilmember Austin-Lane	Assistant City Clerk Carpenter
Councilmember Barry	Community & Government Liaison Ludlow
Councilmember Elrich	Senior Planner Inerfeld
Councilmember Mizeur	City Attorney Sigman
Councilmember Seamens	
Councilmember Williams	

The Council convened at 7:33 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mayor Porter noted that because of the Monday holiday, agenda items will be posted to the Web for the next week's meeting on Wednesday. This will allow for Council decisions this evening to influence the preparation of agenda items. Council concurred with this policy.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Nellie Moxley thanked Councilmember Williams for stop signs. They are working on Kansas Avenue. Two stop signs have been installed. We are waiting for more.

Seth Grimes stated that on January 5, he commented on issue of Ron Trunk's property and his fence on the Colby Aspen Paper Street. Mr. Trunk did not deny my assertions. I reminded Council that the Charter requires the City Manager to enforce the law. Three Council members subsequent to the January 5 meeting called for immediate enforcement. [Mr. Grimes then read from a transcript he prepared of the January 5 meeting.] At that time Mayor Porter said if the Councilmember requests it, the Council will take up this issue. Mr. Grimes said this is not legitimate. Evading official responsibilities is unethical. Please reconsider this. (Written statement submitted.)

Ms. Mizeur noted that on Thursday, January 15, Councilmember Austin-Lane and I met with Mr. Grimes to discuss this issue and the Mayor's suggestion that the ward representative raise the issue. I appreciated Ms. Austin-Lane's input. It is my hope that we can turn this into a win-

win situation. I would like to get resident input on long term solutions, and get a sense of what the ward is thinking. We are going to continue to engage in dialogue. I leave it to the Manager and the Council if more immediate action is needed.

Ms. Austin-Lane said she believed we saw this as having a short term remedy to enforce the law, take the fence down. In the long term, we need to seek community input on a long term solution.

Ms. Austin-Lane commented on another subject. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is moving forward with negotiations with the developer on the Metro site. We are at a critical juncture in having input on this. I would like the Council to support Mayor Porter writing a letter to WMATA asking what the developer's proposal is and asking for a formal response.

Ms. Porter said the letter would be in the form of an inquiry to WMATA. Council concurred.

(Mr. Elrich arrived at 7:42.)

**Reordered the agenda because Chairman Berlage was not yet ready with his presentation.**

## **SPECIAL SESSION**

### **2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Ordinance re: Ethics Ordinance**

Ms. Porter said this revision addresses a few small issues in the ordinance as requested by the State Ethics Commission concerning a technical change in a statutory reference and permissible gifts of tickets to sporting events.

Moved by Williams moved; seconded by Austin-Lane.

There was no discussion.

Ordinance #2004-2 was adopted unanimously at second reading (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

**ORDINANCE #2004-2**  
**(Attached)**

## **PRESENTATION**

### **1. Chair of the Planning Board (M-NCPPC) Derick Berlage**

Ms. Porter noted that Mr. Derick Berlage represented Takoma Park on the County Council before he had his position on the Planning Board.

Also present from M-NCPPC is: Ronnie Gathers, Chief of Southern Region, Pete Bettinger, Park Manager for Sligo Creek Park and April O'Neill, Assistant Park Manager.

Mr. Berlage commented that he has gotten calls, e-mails, and letters about the carry-in, carry-out trash policy and wishes to put what is being done in context.

We did not go into this lightly. We have been facing serious budget problems. The County has priorities—education is a top priority. Many agencies have had to absorb budget cuts. We have had to make difficult choices. There are outstanding work orders for repairs, we have a backlog of 1700 work orders. That will increase. Vehicle maintenance, ballfield maintenance and mowing frequency have all been affected.

We looked at additional pilot programs including privatizing (contracting out). We spent a tremendous amount of money emptying trash cans in the park system. Trash cans are spread out over a vast area in the County. We collect a relatively small amount of trash, but use a lot of staff time and transportation cost.

We decided to explore the carry-in carry-out practice in a pilot program. The expectation is that users will carry out their trash. We started in six parks to see if we could extend this county-wide. Cans were removed in December 2003 county-wide, affecting virtually all the parks in the system. The bags we provided created additional problems (bags don't work). People were taking bags to use for trash and leaving them in the park. The projected savings in FY04 is \$188,000.. We want to free up the money for other higher priority items.

In 2005, the savings will be twice this. We recognize that it will take a while for people to get used to this, and that at first there will be increased litter. But eventually, the need for extra litter collection will go away.

Chairman Berlage made a slide presentation. Our plan of implementation includes notification of community associations, putting up signs on all trash cans, and news articles. We are putting up permanent signs in English and Spanish. Maintenance crews will visit parks once a week to remove ground litter. Staff will respond to complaints.

Our evaluation concluded that the savings were substantial in the parks where the pilot program worked. Sligo Creek Parkway cost us 25% more to deal with trash after the pilot.

We will increase litter pickup in problem parks, including Sligo Creek, enhance coordinated

clean-ups using community groups, and adoption of parks by interested municipalities and townships. We have indicated where a local municipality is interested, we will work with them. Garret Park and the Town of Chevy Chase have begun this program. In December 2004, we will have an evaluation and will consider changes at that time. We will do whatever it takes to deal with the litter problem.

Ms. Porter thanked Chairman Berlage for coming to speak to the City Council. I understand the position the County is in with budget problems. It was interesting that Sligo Creek Park was the only one that cost you more money. I gather that Sligo Creek Park may come out of the program.

Mr. Berlage said, at the end of the day, if we can't make it work we will put the cans back.

Ms. Porter said Takoma Park is not in a position to pick up trash and litter in all the County parks in our City. I would like to put it on the table, since Sligo Creek Park cost you money, if you would compensate the municipality to pick up the trash, maybe we could do it. The situation in the park is not viable right now. People are picking up litter in the park. It seems to me the situation is not tenable at this time.

Mr. Williams referred the criteria used in the evaluation process. There was no taking into account the additional cost for the City. The cost shift needs to be taken into account. Our residents want us to take over this responsibility if it is not being done by the County. If we do it during the evaluation period, it reinforces your numbers, but shifts the cost to us. In this case, we don't want to be responsive, we want you to respond and take on the cost. What about the environmental cost associated with rats? Is that part of the evaluation criteria? Who will get the calls, the County or City? You need to take that into account as well.

Derick Berlage said we want input from anyone.

Mr. Williams made reference to the litter crew visiting a maximum of once a week. The cost of your getting the trash from Sligo Creek Park to Gaithersburg also affects maintenance. Takoma Park is the farthest from the depot. Park maintenance is hard to get to here.

Mr. Berlage said, we try to treat all parks equally. We have a large maintenance facility in Meadowood and in Wheaton.

Ms. Mizeur noted we have a good turnout which speaks of the importance of this issue to our community. I have a four page statement. If we go back to your information, and the pilot being a failure, the \$6,000 that it cost is more like \$10,000, and does not include the 200 hours of administrative staff time. Adding up the numbers of the cost of the pilot, and its failure, is significant. For us to pick up the slack on this is an unfair, unfunded mandate. Some advocate that we pay for this; I advocate some compromise solutions. If a reversal is not possible, implement the new policy in low volume months, re-institute Sligo Creek Park, and pursue an aggressive educational campaign. This park is a stream bed where litter will find its way into the

watershed. The evaluation plan does not include environmental impact analysis.

It was an aggressive campaign, mostly to inform the public of the program, not tell them what to do if litter increases. Please address these questions and the guidelines. In 2003, volunteers collected over 20,000 pounds of garbage. The volunteers had no input into the development of this program. I have some comments on speed control, tree removal, park and playground maintenance. I will summarize my constituents' comments for you.

Mr. Berlage thanked Council for inviting him. He commented that some major points have been raised. When is it appropriate to decide that the program is not working and reverse course? This decision should be made after we have tried the program for a year.

In the early 90's, the County made major changes to trash collection. It started once a week trash collection, and included recycling, and no longer did door to door pickup. We had an outcry county-wide. After two years, that system was accepted by customers of the County. It took a lot of time.

Ms. Mizeur noted, but you were still picking up the trash. In this case we had no input, and we have no recourse.

Mr. Elrich commented we're linear to the park and we have a major rat problem. The park is the number one source of rats. The failure of this program turns it into a better breeding ground for rats. We didn't create a public health problem when we went to once a week trash collection. Mr. Elrich suggested the Inter-County Connector office be closed to save the money needed to collect trash in the parks.

Ms. Austin-Lane said Ward 1 has special concerns. The Ed Wilhelm field trash gets out of control quite quickly. It is a recreation area. Was the success or failure rate in parks based on the isolation of the park?

Mr. Berlage said the six parks were all very different. The Capital Crescent Trail has intense use and is similar to Sligo. Olney Manor Recreation Park is intensively used by leagues; that helped it to be a successful pilot. They organized themselves as leagues prepared to carry out their trash. I honestly don't know why it has been such a challenge here.

Ms. Austin-Lane noted that there is some cost shifting that could go on, and has already gone on. When the parks are trashed, the City gets calls for service. We contact Park and Planning. The public health and welfare are very important considerations, as well as the environmental concerns. In Old Town, the Gazebo property is suffering for a lot of reasons including trash and maintenance issues. Takoma Urban park is also suffering from some maintenance issues. Will this property also face removal of trash cans?

Mr. Berlage said he would be delighted to talk about specific parks.

Ms. Austin-Lane asked if the trash cans at the Gazebo would be removed.

Mr. Berlage said that's a location where the trash can gets a lot of use, and I can see it will be a problem.

Mr. Barry said that Ward 6 residents are concerned about Becca Lilly and Hillwood Manor Park. We collect trash from the parks and streams each year. We put wood chips down recently. My constituents think that carrying out the trash is beyond the pale. Perhaps we could subcontract the trash collection for you. You love parks, as we love parks. The County Council has authorized a lot of money on cultural infrastructure. Telling us to pack up our own trash is like saying bring your own seat to the concert, or perhaps bring your own violins. Let's figure out a way to do this.

Mr. Seamens commented that there are good points made by my Council colleagues. A solution that creates a problem is not a solution. I don't think it's the right way to govern.

Ms. Porter asked for public comments limited to three minutes each.

Tony Davis, Sherman Avenue in Ward 3, thanked Mr. Berlage. Maybe Sligo Creek hasn't gone well because it gets a lot of casual use. Also at Opal Daniels and the Gazebo Park, people visit casually without a lot of forethought, spontaneously. It doesn't square well with not having trash cans. It forces you to plan when you might not have planned a trip. They are right in the fabric of the City. It seems that trash could be picked up easily. I'm disappointed at the lack of coordination with civic associations or the City Council. Without that coordination, policies like this don't have a bright future.

Sandra Fox, said she uses the park in the morning, in late afternoon, on weekends, and has picked up a lot of trash. It is not just a place to recreate. It is also feel the stewardship of nature, see endangered species, and a few old growth trees. The park has more meaning than playing fields and buildings. I support Heather Mizeur's remarks. Over time, the whole atmosphere of caretaking of the park has changed. It has gotten worse over the past three years. Litter has become a problem, even before the trash cans were removed. In the stream, we have found hospital waste, baby diapers, used food containers, batteries, cell phone batteries, all in the water. I was surprised that there was some kind of campaign going on, and I have never seen one park employee there doing anything but locking or unlocking the gate (on Sligo Creek Parkway) on Sundays. When is the litter being picked up? I think they may not be getting here to pick up the litter. With the huge apartment buildings, the population changes, and many languages, we need to reach a very large population. Graffiti and crime are associated with litter. With more liquor bottles, gangs hang out. Safety is a concern.

Nellie Moxley noted Mr. Berlage is filling the shoes of someone we were very fond of. We have been picking up the trash. There are health, safety, and environmental issues. We need the barrels in the parks. She noted the stream conditions. Save our stream. If you would pay us for what we do all year round, you would owe us a lot of money. You could just give us the parks.

You could park some of the trucks down here, and hire community people who need jobs. You owe us some money. There is an easier way to do this.

Bruce Moyer, 6907 Westmoreland, representing WACO, noted that Takoma Urban Park is in the WACO area. Thank you for your responsiveness. There is a constructive relationship between your staff, the City, and the community there, on planning for a playground structure. Takoma Urban Park (the name of the park represents the character of that location) has special problems. It is heavily used by children, daycare, families, and picnickers on Sundays. We will regularly see a significant layover of trash. Because of the proximity of restaurants and dumpsters, we have seen rats there. It will create a health hazard. Please waive and exempt Takoma Urban Park from the policy.

Barbara Thorn, 406 Lincoln Avenue, commented that Sligo Creek Park is a long park. Do you want to carry your trash or dog poop for two or three miles? I don't mind that there are fewer cans, they could be right by the street, but there should be a trash can every one-half mile in the park. I know that excrement should be 200 feet from a water source. There is no part of that trail that is more than 200 feet from the creek. There is now no place to deposit this. That is part of the problem in pack-in pack-out. We have people from other cultures where it is common to throw your trash over your shoulder. This may be the first place that they live in this country. We need to start with the kids. This will need a 10-year or forever education program. It is nicer to have a group adopt a flower bed than it is to carry out trash. How about adopt a garden? Brookside charges for programs. There are other ways to save money besides depriving us of trash cans. Garbage leads to loitering and disturbing behavior.

David Gross, 132 Hilltop Road, said he appreciates the honesty that this is a budget situation. When we first complained, we heard that people need to learn to carry out. We collected 20 letters. Dan Parr said we need to let people know. People from outside the County use the park. We also have drive-by trash. People throw trash out the window. We can't pick it up because there are no trash cans. "Why not put a trash in trash out policy in your offices?"

Linda Cosod commented that she lives next to the park. I am willing to bring out my own trash, and to pick up. I don't think we will ever get it down to nothing. When cleaning up after a dog I was watching for a friend, there was no place to put the trash bag. Even someone like me needs a trash can once in a while.

Larry Molton said he was disappointed that Mr. Berlage or his staff have not replied to e-mails on this issue. My home assessment is up 40%. I don't expect a lot, mainly public health, and public safety. Sanitation and police I do expect. This is a large step backwards for the County, the wealthiest county in the state. I'm a professor of public health at JHU. If you do have the ability to do a comprehensive evaluation, it will cost so much you might as well forget it. It is an unprecedented step backwards in public health in this county.

Scott Gilkeson said he has had some good experience with Mr. Berlage's staff. How do you plan to enforce this? He asked if some parks were exempted.

Mr. Berlage said by education first. As the program develops, we will get to a point where we will do enforcement. The three regional parks, Cabin John, Wheaton, and Seneca have been exempted. Where we serve food we thought we had to have trash cans.

Mr. Gilkeson said I would like to see this program work. Cans fill up, trash spills out. I don't think that the status quo was very good. I would like to see us end up better than overflowing trash cans. I'm glad to hear that our observation in Sligo Creek is correct. In Flower Avenue Park, people expect to leave their trash there. If there was enforcement it might be effective. Maybe a park enforcement officer to take names and educate. There has always been trash in the creek. There will continue to be. Maybe we can think about what to do with some of these issues. Perhaps a few stations where people could deposit trash. I would like to see some energy put into trying to find a way to make this work. We should not shift the burden back to the City. I was disappointed that there was not a baseline environmental study on trash in the parks before you began. Cost alone is not necessarily the best metric.

Rachael Cooper said she lives 10 houses away from Sligo Creek Park. This is not working for us. People have huge parties and they will not take their trash out of the parks. I worked with my Mom to write an article about this. I'm going off to college. It's unfair to ask us to wallow in our own trash during our childhood. We need to preserve this park system.

Reno Aldrighetti, 7213 Central Avenue asked, why is this issue so bothersome? I like to walk in Becca Lilly park. Since the cans were taken out, I've seen a change. When Takoma Park cut back the trash, they did a fine educational program. You are doing this to us. We will pick up the trash and the program will "work." There is a basic contract that we pay the taxes and you keep the place clean. Montgomery County will be requiring more businesses to recycle. Why should a business be required to recycle more when they may not have the money if you won't pick up the trash because you don't have the money? This is the basic service you provide. I've seen trash accumulate. I don't pick up the trash anymore because the contract is broken. Gradually you begin to see little things that weren't there before. The leaves cover it up. Your study should have started by talking with taxpayers. I ask the City Council to make it an issue. The original letter should be in the newsletter, and the City should solicit public comments. It's wrong to implement this kind of a policy and expect that in two years they'll be used to it.

Carol Stewart, Central Avenue, said, I walk 15-20 miles in the park per day, with my dogs. People are discouraged and are leaving the debris where the cans used to be, or along the path. The City has tremendous budget challenges also. The amount of money saved is small compared to the impact on the quality of life.

Rob Bushnell, 201 Hilltop Road, noted his home is adjacent to the park. We use the park daily. Park and Planning should have hosted this forum months ago. I spent hours and hours at public hearings when I worked at Park and Planning. Here is a program that affects many, and the Commission has not had one public hearing. That the parks department will let the City or community groups pick up trash is ludicrous. I am the author of the comment that County employees take their trash home at the end of the day. No one has ever studied that. I don't



think you looked at other ways to pick up the trash. Pay Montgomery County, pay the municipalities, contract it out. This can't work because these are urban parks. People will throw trash or leave trash. Yet you leave the trash cans at the camp grounds, where there is an ethic that would make carry-in carry-out work.

Mr. Berlage conceded that there wasn't enough consultation. This was done as part of the budget process. There was a lot of research into different options. We would have had a community meeting here if we had known. I don't feel that we imposed this. Whatever the history is up to this point, we will work this program county-wide. Where it doesn't work we will reverse course.

Eric Shulman noted he spends time in Becca Lilly Park. The park is kind of the commons for me, where I watch my neighbors' children grow up, have social interaction. I try to keep an eye on things there. The Park and Planning Commission was created to oversee the parks to avoid duplication of effort. At this point, Park and Planning does things and we have to react. The Long Branch Creek restoration effort is underway, very few know about it. What do I have to do to find out about these things so I don't have react to them? We have to look after you to be sure environmental damage is not done. Look at the cost benefit because this doesn't pay for itself. If the Commission are the stewards of the parks, I don't think you are meeting your legal responsibility. I think there is a legal argument to be made here.

Mina Muse said we did not get replies to our e-mails. We live on Long Branch Park. We have two parks and a stream. There are parties every weekend, and overwhelming amounts of trash. Soccer games are held with many parties and beer. Police are not enforcing "no litter." How will you enforce this policy? The Park Police are understaffed. We pick up the trash. The bags get heavy. Please develop some kind of educational program. Don't you have creative people who can do these things? Can't we hire CASA workers to pick up the trash? Why not have recycling bins in the parks? It's a quality of life issue.

Karen Mendez said she represents a group of students who she does creek cleanups with. We're trying to reeducate them. Now there are no trash cans for them to use. What is the phone number to call to do a cleanup? My students are not taking the trash home. I can't take the trash home. Some people will not even use a trash can. I'm trying to teach children the right thing to do.

Derick Berlage said, if you do a trash pickup, call us and tell us where it is. Call 240-650-2600 so we can arrange to pick up this trash.

Liz Brady of Friends of Sligo Creek, said \$26,000 does not seem like a lot of money compared to what they spend on frivolous things, and on development, so how is money an issue? The trash troubles are caused by people who purposely dispose of trash in the park. I have many questions. Is it possible to have recycling bins near the fields, picnic areas, and parking lots? What do you mean when you say you will increase litter pickup by park staff in problem parks?

Mr. Berlage said we do this when we mow and do other maintenance during the growing season. Crews are instructed to pick up litter. There is more litter now. We have a crew dedicated just to litter collection, which we created when we began carry in-carry out. We may need to do more in the short term.

Liz Brady asked, when we volunteer and pick up trash, should we take it home? What should we do when we see a large amount of trash, say in a picnic area?

Mr. Berlage said in the ideal, take it home. If not, describe where it is and call the number for pickup. I'd be happy to take a look at recycling. I'm doubtful that we can do that, but we'll look at it.

Lorraine Pearsall, 7708 Takoma Avenue, said we remember when you were our County Councilman. You ran on a strong environmental platform of public health, environment, and quality of life. We have so very little public open space for our overcrowded urban area. We are so developed, and have so little green space. Please do not do this. Who has the authority to make that decision? You have the responsibility to keep the park clean and pick up the trash.

Mr. Berlage said he may have the authority to reverse the decision but he is going to use the process he's laid out.

Roland Halstead, 7116 Maple Avenue, said he is a bicyclist. Our community has been neglected by the County. It's nice to have had the Sligo Creek Park bikeway built. Now you are making it easier for glass to get on the trail, and beer cans. I've picked up a lot of litter in Flower Park. I think the trash should be picked up and taken away. Maybe you could bike with a trailer to pick up trash.

Karen Cooper said she read the evaluation that the County paid for, where they worked and where they did not. In Westchester, New York it worked. In Takoma Park we are more like Portland, but they had more success in less urban areas. They found that they had to leave the trash cans in areas that were more urban. I'd like to see the trash cans put back. There are more efficient ways. Trucks could be filled to capacity, consolidate runs, get the market tipping rate, and reduce our costs this way.

George French, Albany Avenue, said this is based on budgetary constraints. We need more containers, not fewer. We need to have the means to remove litter when we pick it up. When Long Branch cans are removed, trash ends up in Takoma Park. The cans removed were located near the street. The Matthew Henson trail is an unneeded paved road. Abandon the park renovation project around Jessup Blair Park. There are other projects like these where funds could be transferred to park maintenance. I would like to see a policy for eradication of invasive plant species. Develop a workable maintenance policy for the park and a policy for minimal salting or closing of the parkway which harms the stream. Capture funds from unneeded construction projects. Include creek trash patrols.

Robbi Kimball, Hopewell Street, SOSCA, said that regarding the ad hoc pick up in Sligo Creek Park, it must be less efficient to have employees pick up a lot of small piles and bags than to empty cans.

Mr. Berlage said we expected increased litter collection, and that it would balance out. Sligo Creek Park is the exception.

Ms. Porter noted that she heard Mr. Berlage say one helpful thing, that he is going to continue to watch this park, and will exempt this park from the policy if it continues to be a failure. I encourage you not to wait a whole other year before you decide this. People are going to get tired of picking up this trash.

Ms. Porter asked Bob Guldin (Takoma Park Newsletter editor) to include some of the information in the newsletter. She asked Chairman Berlage for copies of any materials that he used in his presentation. Ms. Porter commented that Mr. Berlage can count on hearing from Takoma Park.

Mr. Elrich commented that it would be helpful if Mr. Berlage would be more of an advocate for the parks and for the Commission's budget. You need to advocate for your department.

Mr. Seamens said that assessments are up countywide and are more so in Takoma Park. The park trash is a basic service. I can't support fighting to get trash cans in Sligo Creek Park. It is a solution that causes problems. We should fight to get trash cans back county-wide.

Ms. Austin-Lane said followup is needed. Please send copies of the videotape of the session to the County Council. We could pass a resolution. George French's pictures are helpful.

Ms. Porter said we can send a letter. It is more powerful for our residents to contact them directly.

Mr. Williams said he agrees that singling out Sligo Creek Park is winning the battle and losing the war. There are other urban areas with problems similar to this.

Ms. Porter said she would be happy to send a letter with the videotapes. She thanked Chairman Berlage for attending.

Mr. Berlage departed at 10:04 p.m.

Following a break, the Council reconvened in Worksession at 10:30 p.m.

## **WORKSESSION**

### **3. Safe Roadways Committee Report.**

Andrew Kelemen presented the Safe Roadways Committee Report. He commented that staff proposes that we have criteria for thinking about how to prioritize in terms of ease of implementation: cost, partners, potential impact, addressing most serious issues, balancing amongst travel modes because bike and pedestrian safety is often neglected.

Short term steps would include the effort to create a Takoma Park transportation committee, that would include pedestrian and bike issues. Communicate more regularly with SHA (State Highway Administration). Ask SHA to study whether a roundabout can be constructed at Takoma Junction. The committee recommended a roundabout be located at one location in the City.

Mr. Seamens asked what is SHA's position on roundabouts?

Mr. Inerfeld said they have installed roundabouts. There is a scarcity of data on pedestrian safety in roundabouts. They are generally better for pedestrians, but are not good for the visually impaired.

Ms. Porter commented on roundabouts. Where there is a pause between cars it works for pedestrians, but in the situations where traffic has no breaks, how can a pedestrian cross there? What about bumper to bumper traffic? How does a roundabout work in that situation?

Mr. Inerfeld said there is a roundabout system, as each car comes in the driver surveys whether they can enter by stopping to see if the way clear and then entering. I will follow-up with Dan Burden on that.

Ms. Porter said she was not sure roundabouts can work here.

Ms. Mizeur suggested looking at the Mount Rainier roundabout, at 35<sup>th</sup> and Rhode Island Avenue.

Ms. Austin-Lane said the Mt. Rainier roundabout is made to be safe for pedestrians.

Mr. Elrich said he is not interested in smoothing the flow of traffic, his priority is pedestrian safety.

Mr. Inerfeld described the problems crossing at Takoma Junction.

Mr. Seamens said the Ritchie, Oswego and Geneva intersection is ideal for a roundabout or traffic circle.

Mr. Williams said that the Montgomery County MML is planning to regularize the meeting with SHA, to make it easier to follow up with them and keep in contact with them.

Ms. Austin-Lane suggested inviting SHA and the Secretary of Transportation to the upcoming

Annapolis luncheon.

Mr. Inerfeld commented on some mid-term steps. Explore traffic calming and other improvements; work with City arborist to identify opportunities to plant street trees along arterials in Takoma Park; develop a sidewalk policy for the City (because sidewalks are critical in urban areas, even if one or two residents don't want one); and incorporate pedestrian safety improvements and streetscape enhancements as part of the resurfacing of Maple Avenue.

For the long term, he suggested the City develop a transportation planning process with a reporting function and working with SHA to implement other recommendations. With the new planner coming on staff, more time can be devoted to this. The issues to explore are cut-through traffic and where it is a problem, and if so, is it a serious problem?

Ms. Porter noted the old neighborhood traffic studies done several years ago by SOSCA, WACO, and others.

Ms. Mizeur asked if the studies say where it is a serious problem? Also, we need to look at increased enforcement.

Ms. Porter noted that neighborhoods don't always want the solutions proposed.

Ms. Austin-Lane asked Mr. Inerfeld to review the old traffic studies.

Mr. Elrich noted that solutions have to be comprehensive.

Ms. Porter said the volume of traffic has been increasing so we need alternatives; and the other big thing is violation of traffic laws. I'm surprised that there was nothing in the report about traffic enforcement.

Andrew Kelemen said the committee advocates a more proactive approach, getting speed cameras.

Ms. Austin-Lane commented on traffic calming on Takoma Avenue accomplished during the planning for the bike trail. When the road is narrowed, you naturally go 20-25 mph, because you're getting the right cues. As we're resurfacing the roads, we need to be thinking about traffic calming. We need to get the most bang for our buck.

Mr. Seamens said the traffic committee will need to be charged to look at the big picture. Enforcement can become an important component. Chief Creamer is working to improve enforcement. We need to look at how to get people out of their cars into public transit and flex cars.

Ms. Austin-Lane asked, what would it cost to measure the quality of life indicators? Where are the most serious traffic safety issues in the City? We need to hone in on the most serious.

Mr. Inerfeld said he will provide speed enforcement information for the Council.

Ms. Porter said traffic enforcement is an important part of police work as it creates good general law enforcement.

Mr. Barry said he would appreciate an update on the effort to recruit replacement officers.

Andrew Kelemen noted that the second part of the committee's recommendations was not addressed at all. The management process should have schedules, dates, someone should be responsible for whether certain things have happened, and there should be public forums. That should not be put off. There is no date as to when a certain thing should happen. You're going to look at the cost of quality of life indicators, but where is the date?

Mr. Finn said there are a number of recommendations that raise staffing issues. Council will need to address it during the Council goals process. We will give you information on staffing and Council will need to decide. We will need to include it in the budget.

Mr. Seamens noted that studies are done and nothing happens with them.

Ms. Porter and Mr. Elrich both commented that neighborhoods got to choose what they wanted to have in their neighborhoods as a result of the traffic studies.

Mr. Finn said it was a successful program, but you had a full time person coordinating it at that time.

Ms. Austin-Lane said she continues to hear from residents that we have been talking about traffic for a long time, but we need to do something to remedy it. We need to put it on a timeline, devote staff time to it, and see results.

Ms. Porter said we can't promise people that we can solve all their traffic problems. Some of the problems are caused elsewhere, and need to be addressed in a larger context.

Ms. Austin-Lane said she would argue that we need to set our hopes higher. There is a great possibility for short term solutions; we need to aim higher.

Mr. Elrich said Council can't impose solutions that the neighborhoods won't support. He cited problems with the state roads. We haven't had requests for traffic studies in the neighborhoods.

Ms. Porter said it is important to take the long view. We can make things better, and we should, but it cannot be fixed with one or two efforts.

Ms. Austin-Lane commented that we should see what we can accomplish now. I hope we can get traffic calming and pedestrian safety as a Council priority now, so that we can see some progress.

Ms. Porter said there is important work going on, on the regional level with the Purple Line, development issues, and more traffic enforcement.

Mr. Seamens said he supports what Ms. Porter and Ms. Austin-Lane are saying. Traffic is probably the number one issue. We need to focus on the number one concern of residents in the community. My constituents are interested in participating in the process.

Ms. Austin-Lane said we need a full-time person to do this.

Mr. Elrich noted we are putting money into the budget to contract for an engineer to support this.

Mr. Williams said that with respect to traffic calming and related issues, we had someone on staff to coordinate it, then there was a shifting of priorities. This discussion leads to the goals/budget discussion, set-aside funding, and a move forward on implementation. That's where the timelines come in.

Mr. Kelemen said he would like to see a tighter management on how we handle this problem.

Mr. Williams said that after we develop the priorities, all that will come into play.

Mr. Elrich asked how much did the old traffic /neighborhood studies cost us? How much staff time was needed?

Mr. Kelemen suggested that the City develop a set of requirements that we would pass on to others who are doing a study.

Mr. Williams said the SHA budget doesn't any longer have the program that incorporates traffic calming (Neighborhood Conservation Program). We need to let them know that this is important to us.

Mr. Barry noted that for New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard, planning is ongoing now.

Ms. Porter said we should commit to some short term steps: set up a committee, communicate with SHA regularly, ask SHA to study the roundabout option, and then incorporate the other items into the budget discussion.

Ms. Austin-Lane said she would like to be briefed again on particulars before we get into budget discussions.

Mr. Finn asked that the Council set up a specific Council goal and then staff will present the budget for it. He clarified that next week the Council FY04 goals are on the agenda.

#### **4. Carroll Avenue Streetscape Project**

Mr. Inerfeld said that there is \$650,000 available that needs to be spent or encumbered by the end of June. We held a pre-proposal meeting, six submitted bids, three were interviewed, and consensus on the panel was to select KCI Technologies. Mr. Inerfeld described their approach to the project. They are based in Hunt Valley, Maryland and will be coordinating the project from Laurel. We liked their community participation skills and their need to be straightforward. We think they will present ideas well. We liked their proposal and believe they are a good company for the job. They have a large staff, including an arborist. They have extensive SHA experience.

Mr. Elrich said he likes that they are aware they have to work within a budget.

Ms. Austin-Lane commended Mr. Inerfeld for his work and getting the community involved early on.

Mr. Inerfeld said the first workshop is scheduled for February 16. There will be two workshops. We can do additional outreach as well. We will send the dates to Council as soon as they are set. An ordinance authorizing the contract is scheduled for next week.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 p.m.